

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method of aiding a user in using features of a software application, the method comprising:
  - receiving from a user a selection of a layout to be used in generating an informational display for presenting results of a data repository query;
  - displaying to the user at least one input field and an image of a sample informational display that is based on the selected layout, the at least one input field being displayed in association with at least one feature shown in the displayed sample image; and
  - receiving via the at least one input field user input to be used in modifying the at least one feature in the informational display.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the user selects the layout by selecting an existing informational display on which the informational display is to be based.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising extracting at least one user-changeable code portion from the existing informational display, wherein the at least one input field is bound to the extracted code portion.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising placing the extracted code portion in an XML file that is to be modified using the user input, and subsequently using the XML file in creating the new informational display.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein creating the informational display comprises adding non user-changeable code portions to the XML file.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one input field and the displayed sample image are part of a guided process comprising multiple input fields and displayed sample images.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the guided process is selected from a plurality of guided processes based on the selected layout.
8. The method of claim 6, wherein at least two of the multiple displayed sample images correspond to different configurations of the informational display.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the user input is at least one selected from the group consisting of: selection of a title for the informational display, selection of the

data repository query to be provided in the informational display, selection of at least one filter value for filtering the results of the data repository query, and combinations thereof.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one input field is a drop-down list box with multiple user-selectable inputs.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying the input field in association with the feature comprises displaying the input field on top of the displayed sample image in close proximity to the feature.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising binding the at least one input field to a code portion in the informational display such that the user input can be used in modifying the at least one feature in the informational display.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein binding the at least one input field to the code portion comprises using an XPATH statement, and wherein using the XPATH statement comprises generating a new node in the informational display if the new node is specified by the XPATH statement and does not yet exist in the informational display.

14. A computer program product tangibly embodied in an information carrier, the computer program product including instructions that, when executed, cause a processor to perform operations comprising:

receive from a user a selection of a layout to be used in generating an informational display for presenting results of a data repository query;

display to the user at least one input field and an image of a sample informational display that is based on the selected layout, the at least one input field being displayed in association with at least one feature shown in the displayed sample image; and

receive via the at least one input field user input to be used in modifying the at least one feature in the informational display.

15. A method of aiding a user in using features of a software application, the method comprising:

receiving from a user a selection of a template file to be used in creating a new informational display for presenting results of a data repository query, the template file being based on a layout;

extracting at least one user-changeable code portion from the template file according to the layout and placing the code portion in an XML file;

performing a guided process for modifying the XML file, the guided process involving displaying to the user at least one input field and an image of a sample informational display that is based on the layout, the at least one input field being displayed on top of the displayed image in close proximity to a feature shown in the displayed sample image;

receiving user input via the at least one input field;

modifying the XML file using the user input; and

creating the new informational display using the XML file.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the guided process is selected from a plurality of guided processes based on the layout of the selected template file.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein modifying the XML file using the user input involves using an XPATH statement to generate a new node in the new informational display if the new node is specified by the XPATH statement and does not yet exist in the new informational display.

18. A computer program product tangibly embodied in an information carrier, the computer program product including instructions that, when executed, generate on a display device a graphical user interface for aiding a user in using features of a software application, the graphical user interface comprising:

a displayed image of a sample informational display that is based on a layout selected by a user to be used in creating an informational display; and

at least one input field being displayed in association with at least one feature shown in the displayed sample image, wherein a user input made via the input field is to be used in modifying the at least one feature in the informational display.

19. The computer program product of claim 18, wherein the at least one input field is capable of receiving at least one selected from the group consisting of: selection of a title for the informational display, selection of the data repository query to be provided in the informational display, selection of at least one filter value for filtering the results of the data repository query, and combinations thereof.

20. The computer program product of claim 18, wherein the at least one input field is displayed on top of the displayed sample image in close proximity to the feature.